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ABSTRACT

One of the most important responsibilities of community college academic leaders is to encourage and provide resources for professional development. A Teaching-Learning Center (TLC) can be a crucial resource for achieving that goal. Trends in faculty and student demographics, the expansion of technology, changes in college governance, and declines in institutional effectiveness all underscore the importance of supporting the services and resources of professional development centers for community college faculty and staff. In helping college personnel improve the quality of education and the functioning of the institution, TLC's should provide the following services: (1) orientation for new employees; (2) workshops and other professional development opportunities to improve the instructional skills of faculty; (3) materials to help internationalize the curriculum; (4) support for advancement activities, including clarification of institutional policies and guidance in preparing portfolios; (5) resources related to the formative evaluation activities of faculty; (6) facilitation of partnerships with other educational institutions; and (7) advocating efforts to improve the teaching and learning environment, including issues related to technology acquisition, classroom furnishings, and organizational development. In addition to promoting the use of a TLC, other strategies for enhancing academic leaders' roles in professional development include attending and sending faculty to development conferences and discussing training responsibilities, needs, and resources with other leaders and with faculty and staff. Contains 10 references. (TGI)

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THE TEACHING RESOURCE CENTER:

A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR CHAIRS AND DEANS IN THE QUEST FOR FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND EXCELLENCE

By

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Mike McHargue has been a member of the faculty at Foothill College since 1977 where he also has served as Coordinator of Staff Development and the Teaching Resource Center. A list of his other academic leadership positions is contained in the biography for his "Recent Advances in Retreats" paper in this conference book.

Mike has worked in and around Teaching Learning Centers for over two decades. He was the founding director of the Learning Center at Stanford University in 1972 and he has been an important resource for community college staff developers as they planned their centers. His speaking, writing and consulting have provided TLC for many TLCs!

His association with the NCCCA began at its birth--when he was leading a Great Chairs Seminar for the Maricopa County CCD and they committed themselves to develop this organization. He led the "hybrid" Great Chairs/Conference Planning Workshop that preceded the first annual conference and he has served on its Advisory Board. Mike has presented at three of the conferences and he led the first class through our National Institute. He has led two other "classes" in their Institute development.

McHargue is a national facilitator for Great Teaching Seminars, Classroom Assessment Techniques, and Instructional Skills Workshops. He has made numerous presentations to college and university faculty on critical thinking, cultural diversity, active learning, learning communities, and student-centered instructional practices.

While he has been working in staff development since 1972, his most recent focus began in 1988 when he became part of the founding executive board of the California Community College Council for Staff Development(4C/SD). He has chaired the Faculty Development Committee for the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and has written four statewide staff development grants which strongly influenced the professional development sections of California's community college reform legislation.

McHargue has served as an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow in Academic Leadership and a Fellow of the League for Innovation in the Community College. He won the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development's Award for the Western Region in 1989 and the National Leadership Award in 1990. He has also been honored by the College Reading and Learning Association, the Community College Humanities Association, and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development.

Mike holds a Ph.D. in counseling psychology and psychological studies in education from Stanford University. He earned his master of arts degree in counseling and guidance and educational psychology form California State University at Northridge, and his bachelor of arts degree in psychology from Occidental College. He also attended Mexico City College and Pierce Junior College in California.

EVEN ACADEMIC LEADERS NEED "TLC"

THE TEACHING-LEARNING CENTER: A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR CHAIRS AND DEANS IN THE QUEST FOR FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND EXCELLENCE

One of your most important responsibilities as an academic leader is to encourage and provide resources for the professional development of yourself, your faculty, and your staff. Your college Teaching-Learning Center (TLC) can be a crucial resource to help you achieve that goal. This paper will discuss the trends which lead to the need for strong faculty/staff development programs and the activities they can include. The associated workshop will provide an interactive opportunity to discuss the wide variations of programs and centers as well as the strategies you can employ to obtain full benefits from them.

I have worked with community college TLCs for more than 15 years. In the late 70's, I discussed the development of the first California version--the Teaching Resource Center at American River College in Sacramento. It opened for business in 1980 and it remains a powerful model for programs throughout the U.S. Since then I have had the opportunity to help develop the centers at Foothill College and De Anza College in our district, and consult with Miami-Dade, Maricopa, and districts throughout California. In addition, I have learned many additional tricks from colleagues reporting on their programs and centers at NCSPOD and other Teaching/Learning Conferences. I have worked in the Foothill Teaching Resource Center since its inception in 1987.

In 1995, Dr. Susan Kah, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at the Medical Campus of Miami-Dade Community College, presented a workshop at the National Chair Academy Conference on TLCs. With her permission and encouragement, I wish to reprint her excellent paper here:

The Teaching and Learning Center: A Campus Resource for Faculty and Staff Development

There are several societal and educational trends which underscore the importance of establishing and generously supporting the services and resources of professional development centers, also known as teaching and learning centers, for community college faculty and staff. The magnitude of these trends mandates that professional development efforts be more than haphazard; they must reflect a comprehensive and accurate assessment of needs, be an integral and visible part of the organizational structure, have the support of senior administrators as well as the trust of the faculty and staff, and be managed in a cost-effective manner.

What are these trends? Many community college faculty and staff have been in their positions for twenty-five or more years. Some of these individuals are retiring, and they are all growing older. In a study conducted in 1987 by the United States Department of Education, the average age of full-time faculty was 47. By year 2000, the percentage of United States faculty over 55 years of age will be 52 per cent! The abilities to foster productivity and vitality among "tenured" faculty and to recruit, select, orient, and nurture new faculty are essential concerns in the teaching and learning center.

A second trend, related to the one just described, is the changing demographics of the student population. They too are getting older; adult learning styles often require

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different teaching strategies than those developed for traditional students. In addition to getting older, our students are also more diverse: ethnically, culturally, and socially. However, traditional structures of curriculum and instruction perpetuate the myth of a single American culture and devalue the cultural pluralism upon which our future lies. The teaching and learning center is focused on helping staff increase cultural sensitivity and supporting faculty in their attempts to infuse diversity concepts into the curriculum.

A third trend is the expansion of technology and the accompanying access to information which increasingly pervade instructional and management functions. A major role of the teaching and learning center is to enable faculty and staff to become comfortable with the new technology--in the office, laboratory, classroom, library, and in the media services area. Because technology is evolving so rapidly, faculty must have "experts" with which to communicate and rely on as they try to restructure the teaching and learning process.

A fourth trend is a change in college governance as faculty and staff are empowered through inclusion in decision making at all levels of the institution. As faculty and staff are expected to assess and articulate the needs of their constituents and participate in strategic planning, the teaching and learning center supports the acquisition of skills needed for problem solving, consensus building and visioning desired futures.

The fifth and distressing trend is the apparent decline in institutional effectiveness. Policymakers and others concerned about higher education indicate that college graduates lack the skills and knowledge required for success in a high-tech and information-based global economy. In An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education, the Wingspread Group on Higher Education begins its report with the following:

> A disturbing and dangerous mismatch exists between what American society needs of higher education and what it is receiving. Nowhere is this mismatch more dangerous than in the quality of undergraduate preparation provided on many campuses. The American imperative for the 21st century is that society must hold higher education to much higher expectations or risk national decline.

Acknowledging the diversity of American higher education, the authors believe there are three fundamental issues that must be addressed: taking values seriously, putting student learning first, and creating a nation of learners. In response to concerns regarding institutional effectiveness, the teaching and learning center is committed to helping college personnel improve the quality of education and the functioning of the institution.

The chair is often in the best position to help faculty understand the implications for professional development associated with such trends as those just described. Chairs, as academic leaders occupying pivotal positions in the organization of higher education, serve as important communication links between academic units and the administrative hierarchy. "The chair remains the only official on campus who attempts to 'interpret the department to the administration and the administration to the faculty'" (Seagren et al, 1993).

Tucker (1984) recognized the importance of chairperson involvement in the development of faculty and identified three approaches department chairs might use as faculty developers: the caretaker, the broker and the developer. The caretaker recognizes the need but believes it is the responsibility of the faculty member; the broker makes faculty aware of available development opportunities and encourages participation; the developer actively assists faculty members grow and develop. The latter, more aggressive approaches are definitely indicated in an era characterized by unprecedented challenges and rapid rates of change in higher education.

What resources and services should the teaching learning center provide for faculty and staff? Which of these may be especially valued by the chair who functions as a "broker" or "developer?" The teaching and learning center addresses employee needs at all points of their professional careers. The center should assist those, frequently chairs, who recruit and select new employees by helping them develop and apply the skills, such as behaviorally oriented interviewing, which can make these processes effective.

Centers orient new employees, both full-time and part-time, to their roles within the college environment, including the institution's performance expectations and reward system. Workshops and other professional development opportunities, such as participation in professional conferences, mini-grants to enhance the teaching learning environment, peer consultation, and the provision of developmental resource materials and equipment, should be available to faculty and staff characterized by a wide variety of needs and goals. "Seasoned" faculty and staff should be provided with opportunities to share their expertise and develop new skills, such as using instructional technology in the classroom, which revitalize their practices and work effort. Those retiring should be assisted with their planning and role transition.

Centers have a responsibility to support employees in their advancement activities; this may include clarifying institutional policies and procedures. providing guidance with the development of portfolios and/or other forms of written documentation, and training administrators and committee members for important decision making processes. Centers should clearly communicate, however, the strong message that they are not responsible for establishing those policies and procedures which govern the evaluation or performance review process and personnel decisions resulting in the granting of contract, promotion and financial reward.

Although chairs are responsible for evaluating faculty as well as fostering faculty development, the teaching and learning center should serve as a resource to employees primarily in formative evaluation activities. The teaching and learning center staff should not be requested by chairs or administrators to provide perceptions or data for summative evaluations and personnel decisions. Once the neutrality of the center's staff is compromised or maintenance of confidentiality is an issue, employees will not feel comfortable sharing their needs and asking for assistance.

In addition to enhancing individual professional development, the teaching and learning center is concerned with the teaching and learning environment, from technology acquisition and use to classroom furnishings, and organizational development. In these areas, the function of the center may be to raise questions, rather than to provide answers. These could include: How successful is the college/campus in accomplishing its stated mission? How is this determined? What implications are there for curriculum and program development? How effective are student support services and how is this determined? How does the college/campus expand its capacity to create its future, establish priorities and allocate resources? What effect does this have on employees and students? How can the resources of the

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teaching and learning center be used to enhance the art and practice of a learning organization?

To summarize, chairs need to know the many ways in which the teaching and learning center can help them as faculty and staff "developers." They also should be aware that because centers measure success as the extent to which they address the needs of others and the institution, they are responsive to requests for assistance and committed to evaluation of their effectiveness. The following is only a partial and evolving list of possible goals for a teaching and learning center:

- Orient new employees
- Improve instructional skills of faculty
- Internationalize the curriculum
- Maintain faculty currency in discipline
- Introduce new and effective technology
- Increase student success rates
- Promote career planning and advancement
- Clarify institutional policies and procedures, especially those related to evaluation
- Respond to new regulations and laws
- Respond to societal changes and needs
- Facilitate partnerships with other educational institutions and business and industry
- Involve all employees in governance
- Support strategic and operation planning
- Promote an environment supportive of teaching and learning

I'd like to add a few notes to Dr. Kah's presentation:

Not all TLCs are called Teaching Learning Centers. Some of the variations on the theme are: Teaching Resource Center, Staff Development Center, and Center for Teaching Excellence. There are many others. I prefer "TLC" because of the potential play on acronyms and because of its focus on learning. As we redefine ourselves as institutions that "cause learning" rather than "provide instruction" (Barr and Tagg, 1995) that emphasis on learning is important; as we move toward becoming evolving, changing, "learning organizations" (Senge, 1990), it is crucial. (Nevertheless, at Foothill we recently changed our name from TRC (copied shamelessly from American River) to Staff Development Center--to correctly acknowledge that we have served our entire learning community since we started.)

Not every college has a TLC, by any name. But virtually all of them have faculty/staff development programs. Your job as chair/academic leader is to find those programs and professionals who can help you support professional development. (Your job may also be to help your college collect those staff development programs and services into a central place--your TLC. What an opportunity--to help support and mold a unit that will enable you to be a much more effective leader!)

I believe every good academic leader is a good faculty/staff developer. Most of your budgets are for people; it is your crucial responsibility to keep them (and yourself) at their peaks of training, productivity, enthusiasm, and knowledge. Here are some other things you can do to enhance your professional development role:

- Go to (and send your folks to) staff/development conferences (as well as discipline meetings) to learn new teaching/learning techniques.

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- If you have a TLC, be sure the professionals there know your needs.
- If you don't have one, develop one.
- Discuss your training responsibilities, needs, resources, and techniques with other academic leaders--and your faculty and staff.
- Use a department/division retreat to help determine your staff needs. (If you want to hear more about my biases in this area, check out the paper/breakout session on "Recent Advances in Retreats.")

Finally, although we have "played" with the idea of "TLC", there is no doubt that providing for your colleagues' professional development is a fine way to demonstrate Tender Loving Care. It is quite consistent with the notion of "Servant Leader" that many of us believe in. Work with your staff development colleagues to provide appropriate learning experiences for your people. It will ensure the attainment of our ultimate goal—enhanced student learning.

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